DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 193 575 CG 014 736

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TITLE Perceived Community Functions and Supportive Residential Environments.
PUB DATE 1 Sep 80
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (88th, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September 1-5, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adjustment (to Environment); *Community Satisfaction; *Community Services; Leisure Time; Models; Need Gratification; *Older Adults; Recreational Activities; *Residential Care; *Rural Environment
IDENTIFIERS *Support Systems

ABSTRACT

Results of an illustrative study emphasize the importance of the images that the elderly and the general public have of a rural community's services for senior citizens. These images help to identify ways in which programs and services can be tailored to the requirements of the elderly. Public support for political action that bears directly upon services for the elderly may depend on whether people feel that such services contribute to their own welfare; hence educational efforts may be needed to ensure public understanding and support. (Author/CS)

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PERCEIVED COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS AND SUPPORTIVE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

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CG 014736

Paper Presented in the Symposium, "Characterizing Supportive Residential Environments for the Elderly", American Psychological Association, Montreal, September 1, 1980.

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What characteristics of a residential environment enhance the well-being of elderly residents? Answers to this question are far from clear, particularly for molar non-institutional environments like towns and communities. One approach to this question, that of "perceived community functions", focuses upon one delimited facet of this question - the contributions individuals see various services, facilities, and other attributes of a residential community making to their well-being. The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe, illustrate, and critique the perceived community functions perspective. In overview, alternative theoretical approaches to the question are briefly reviewed in terms of their applicability to this issue. Then the perceived community function perspective is outlined. Next, a survey of residents of small communities in Indiana illustrates the approach. Finally, the degree this approach contributes to our understanding the supportiveness of residential community environments is evaluated.

BACKGROUND

What contributions to one's subjective well-being do residents anticipate a community will perform for them? To which attributes (services, facilities, social networks, etc.) do people turn for each "function" or type of contribution? Are these functions comparable among various sectors of the population? Several major theoretical perspectives on subjective well-being and on the dynamics of residential community environments provide useful points of departure in addressing these issues. In themselves, however, they cannot directly answer these questions, principally because they do not attempt to bridge the gap between the perceptual structure of individuals and attributes of the residential community environment.

One current approach to subjective well-being first identifies various domains or sectors of "life experience" and then estimates the relationship of contentment with these domains to overail subjective well-being or satisfaction with particular environments. The items comprising a domain may be defined a priori on conceptual grounds, e.g., the classification of major domains by Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976), or empirically by multivariate clustering or grouping rechnizues, e.g., Andrews and Withey (1976). Illustratively, these experiences may refer to critical incidents, i.e., events occuring in one's life that are seen by individuals as substantially enhancing or lowering their sense of well-being (Flanagan, 1978). Along similar lines are stressful life events such as depression, marriage or death of a spouse that can potentially imperil one's mental health (e.g., Bradburn, 1969; Bradburn and Caplovitz, 1965; Constantini, Braun, and Davis, 1973). Included also are satisfaction with particular conditions experienced by the individual which are specified in trans-situational terms such as satisfaction with one's standard of living (e.g., Medley, 1976) or health (e.g., Andrew and Withey, 1976), satisfaction with one's performance in a role such as worker (e.g., Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers, 1976), satisfaction with the tenor of one's relationship with significant others such as spouse or children (e.g., Andrews and Withey, 1976), or satisfaction with other areas of concern in one's daily life (Cantril, 1965). Although this "experience domains" approach has been very useful in other contexts, it cannot by itself clarify the issue of which functions individuals see attributes of the local residential community perform for their subjective well-being. The principal obstacle is the lack of direct correspondence between attributes of a community environment and life domains as specified in terms of "experiences."

A clear example is that of interpersonal relationships. An experience domain posited by investigators (e.g., Andrews and Withey, 1976) pertains to the felt adequacy of one's relationship with friends and/or family members. Strictly speaking, the tenor of one's relationships as fulfilling or unsatisfactory is not an attribute of the community environment per se, but rather is a reaction to an attribute. Spatial proximity to friends/family or frequency of contact with such significant others would be attributes of the extra-personal environment. Proximity or contact do not necessarily indicate that those relationships will be close or satisfying. Proximity and contact may facilitate the development of close primary ties (e.g., Athanasiou and Yoshioka, 1973; Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1950) and may be especially important to maintain social ties among the elderly (e.g., Nahemow and Lawton, 1975). Yet frequency of informal contacts with friends and relatives and more formal participation in social clubs do not inevitably preclude loneliness, stress, or unsatisfying relationships (e.g., Shanas, et al., 1968). Interaction with significant others does not imply intimacy or close relationships (e.g., Lowenthal and Haven, 1968). The disjuncture between life experience and environmental attribute paradigms precludes any direct generalization from the former to the latter. A residential community environment must be specified in terms of extra-rather than intra-personal properties.

A second, and distinctly different, approach is that of system or community level functions (e.g., Warren, 1963). Theoretically, in order to remain viable as an organized system residential communities, institutions, and other forms of social organization must ensure the performance of certain functions. If a residential community is to continue to exist as an entity, the institutions, groups, and individuals composing that community must provide a framework of norms and rules of behavior, must ensure that particular activities occur, and in other ways behave so as to provide for the continuity of the

community. An example is Warren's (1963) hypothesized socialization function; some means must be developed to ensure that children and other new residents internalize the dictates and norms of the local culture if that community system is to survive the demise of the present generation of residents.

There is a major difficulty in directly applying this approach to identifying the contributions to subjective well-being which residents anticipate a community will perform for them. Current theories employing this "community level system functions" paradigm do not specify how the prerequisites for a viable community system are related to the needs of individual residents. The welfare of individuals in a community system cannot be understood by attending solely to the maintenance requirements of the community as a supra-individual system (cf. Mercer, 1956). As Gerson noted (1976), to solve the ancient problem of balancing the good of the individual and the good of society as a whole, one should assess the pattern of interaction between individuals and the environment. Beyond considering individual quality of life in communal terms, one must also define system or communal quality of life in individual terms.

Yet another current approach may be labeled a "specific community attribute" perspective. In this model the contribution or role of specific services or facilities is estimated from the association between indices of subjective well-being and the quality/quantity of an attribute. In the typical study particular community attributes are selected and measures of the actual condition of those attributes (e.g., Galle, Gove, and McPherson, 1972; Zehner, 1977) or indices of individuals' reactions to the present condition of those attributes (e.g., Campbell, et al., 1976), are developed. Next, subjective well-being is gauged either in objective terms such as recidivism among mental patients (Smith, 1973), homocide rates (Booth and Welch, 1973), or other forms of individuals' pathology (e.g., Galle, et al,

1972); or it may be gauged by subjective (evaluative) indicators such as happiness (e.g., Bradburn and Caplovitz, 1965), overall life satisfaction (e.g., Zehner, 1977), or satisfaction with one's community environment in toto (e.g., Goudy, 1977). Analyses of the data attempt to identify the unique contribution a given attribute or set of attributes make to subjective well-being.

Although this approach has been quite valuable in identifying linkages between various subjective states and facets of the external environment, three complications preclude its direct application to the questions posed here. The first two are procedural issues that render the bulk of past studies using this model equivocal when applied to the current questions, while the third problem is inherent in the model itself. The first problem is that the approach hinges upon the actual variability in the condition or availability of the attribute in the sample of communities investigated. Limited variation in an attribute may readily lead to underestimates of the importance of that attribute. An obvious paradox is that the importance of those attributes truly fundamental to the survival of a community and its residents (e.g., provision for at least some emergency medical assistance, employment or other means of providing income) may readily be underestimated due to restricted variability (cf. Strumpel, 1974). If particular attributes are actually essential to the maintenance of a residential community, any sample of "live" communities by definition would contain very few in which these attributes were nonexistent or seriously malfunctioning. On the other hand, in lieu of an established theoretical paradigm an attribute can be misspecified and the importance of that attribute can easily be overestimated. This may occur with objectively defined attributes when an "intrinsically unimportant" attribute is related (such as by a common delivery system) to an "intrinsically important" attribute not specifically included in the analysis. Overestimates may be especially troublesome when the condition

or availability of an attribute is indexed in more subjective terms such as by resident satisfaction with that attribute. Is an association between satisfaction with an attribute and overall subjective well-being due to the former determining the latter? Or is the association a function of the well known halo effect occurring when the evaluation of one's life or of the community as a whole colors one's reactions to specific parts of that whole? These considerations suggest that any investigation based heavily upon the actual variability in the condition or availability of specific attributes may potentially misestimate the function or contribution played by community attributes. What is needed is a measure that is as free as possible from the actual condition of those local communities included in the study. For example, an analysis based upon individuals' satisfaction with the current condition of local attributes would be less acceptable than an analysis assessing one's preferences for having particular attributes in any community in which one might live.

A second complication in applying previous investigations to the present question pertains to many, but certainly not to all (e.g., Rojeck, Clemente, and Summers, 1975; Goudy, 1977) past studies. Multiple regression or other statistical techniques have been used to assess the unique contribution of single attributes to well-being. Such analyses are difficult to interpret in light of the hypothesized (e.g., Clark, 1973; Warren, 1963) multifunctional and substitutable nature of community attributes. A single service or other attribute may play a variety of roles, may make more than a single contribution to residents' welfare. For example, the school system can provide for the socialization of the young (Warren, 1963), yet it may typically be seen by the public as basically job training (Campbell and Eckerman, 1964). Further, numerous attributes may be addressed to the same underlying function or contribution. Illustratively, movies, parks, swimming pools, and other such attributes provide recreation and entertainment for local residents. Within limits (Christensen and Yoesting, 1978; Tinsley, Barrett, and Kass, 1977),

residents may perceive many of these as substitutable or complementary (e.g., Christensen and Yoesting, 1978; Meyersohn, 1972; O'Leary, Field, and Schreuder, 1974).

For these reasons, community functions might well be demonstrated more clearly in the overlaps among perceptions of various attributes than in residents' unique reactions to a specific service or facility. Operationally, the commonality among perceptions of various attributes estimated by a factor or cluster analysis may be a more easily interpreted index of a perceived contribution to well-being than are reactions to a single attribute or to that aspect of a single attribute not shared with other attributes included in a given analysis. At heart, this is a special case of the now traditional rationale for the use of composite indicators of well-being (e.g., Smith, 1973).

The third and more basic obstacle is that the model does not explicitly consider perceived contributions. When the availability or condition of community attributes is measured "objectively", there is no guarantee that individuals' judgements will be consistent with these states (e.g., d'Iribarne, 1974). Even if such knowledge is demonstrated, an observed association between the availability/condition of an attribute and one's subjective well-being does not indicate which of many possible functions residents see that attribute to play. Although indices of resident satisfaction or other more subjective measures of the quality/quantity of an attribute may avoid the former difficulties, they do not necessarily avoid the latter.

A fourth approach particularly worthy of note is the "social ecological" paradigm developed by Moos and associates (Insel and Moos, 1974 a and b; Moos, 1973, 1974; Moos and Insel, 1974). Correctional institutions, universities, hospital wards and other human environments vary on particular psychosocial dimensions representing the tenor of the person-milieu interactions within

those environments. A series of these "social climate" dimensions have been postulated. For example, "peer cohesion" refers to the degree to which individuals perceive that their interpersonal relations encourage them to provide mutual assistance. "Clarity" is the extent to which the rules and policies governing that environment are made explicit. The degree to which individuals perceive that a particular climate characterizes their environment has been found to be associated with the level of well-being experienced by those individuals (cf. Insel and Moos, 1974 a). For example, Caffrey (1969) studied the environments of Benedictine and Trappist monks and found a prevalence of coronary heart disease in those environments characterized as competitive with a sense of time urgency.

This approach has much to recommend it as a point of departure for investigations of the functions that individuals see their residential community can perform for their subjective well-being. It identifies a wide range of salient features of a living environment. Further, it can be seen to occupy the middle ground between the approaches labeled here as "community level system functions" and "experience domains" in that it focuses upon individuals' reactions to those attributes of an environment important to their well-being. In this way it displays a thrust which Gerson (1976), for one, sees as necessary for a workable theory of well-being. That is, it emphasizes patterns of interaction among people within a setting, patterns which both mold individuals as individuals and which stem from their activities. In addition, we should note that by concentrating upon clusters of features that play a common role, it implicitly can take into account the multifunctional and substitutable nature of environmental attributes.

On the other hand, previous studies using the social ecological model cannot answer the questions posed here. First, the present questions pertain to the way individuals <u>conceptualize</u> their residential environment.

With few exceptions, the dimensions employed in previous investigations did not necessarily represent perceptual dimensions, i.e., perspectives along which individuals cognitize their residential community environment. With some notable exceptions (e.g., Stern, 1970), analyses of dimensions relevant to the individual's welfare in a given environment typically have not verified by direct empirical test the dimensionality of individuals' perceptions of environmental attributes. It is possible that distinctions drawn by the investigators among different dimensions or subdimensions did not correspond to the distinctions visualized by members of that environment. For example, members may have perceived a smaller number of dimensions, each containing a larger number of attributes, than did the investigators.

Second, in the social ecological approach the number and the nature of the subdimensions composing a higher order dimension vary somewhat from one type of environment to another, as do the empirical referents (operational definitions) of the dimensions and subdimensions. With but few exceptions (Blake, Weigl and Perloff, 1975; Moos and Brownstein, 1977; Moos 1976) the social ecological paradigm has not been applied to molar residential community environments like town or cities. Hence, the dimensions hypothesized to describe other environments may not directly apply to these larger residential communities. A similar question can be raised about the applicability of a given dimensions to subpopulations such as elderly residents of small communities. That a set of environmental attributes play a particular role for the general public does not necessarily imply that they play a similar role for a specific subpopulation.

In conclusion, current concepts cannot satisfactorily answer the questions posed here. The foregoing considerations indicate that a workable approach would have several features. It would specify the residential community environment in terms of attributes external to the individual rather than as

intra-personal characteristics or experiences. The attributes would potentially be interpretable as pertaining directly to the well-being of residents as individuals rather than solely to the "well-being" of the community as a supra-individual entity. It must be addressed to the individuals' perceptions of attributes and specify the dimensionality of those perceptions. Operational measures of the attributes' contribution should be based as little as possible on the actual availability conditions or the actual organization of local attributes. Finally, for simplicity of interpretation, a workable approach could consider clusters of attributes rather than the operation of single attributes.

A PERCEIVED COMMUNITY FUNCTION PERSPECTIVE

A "perceived community function" (PCF) is a type of contribution to subjective well-being for which members of a residential community look to particular community attributes. A "function" would be a set of one or more interrelated needs (reinforcements) that are addressed through usage of particular attributes or simply through the presence of those attributes in the community. A "perceived function," in turn, would be the anticipation by residents that a particular configuration of needs/reinforcements would be addressed by a set of one or more attributes of the community environment.

PCFs should be identifiable in residents' preferences for or demands to have particular properties available to them in a residential community. More specifically, the potential multifunctional and substitutable nature of a function suggests that a function should be more interpretable when seen in the covariance among attribute preferences than in the preference for a single attribute. For example, it may be difficult to interpret residents' beliefs that having indoor entertainment facilities available is important to their welfare. Does such a preference indicate the existence of a recreation

function? Or is it a form of desire for a healthy economic base, comparable in part to the production/distribution/consumption function of Warren (1963)? The value residents ascribe to indoor entertainment facilities might be more readily understood if it were known that such a preference correlated highly with the values individuals see in having access to parks and other outdoor recreational facilities or in the availability of social clubs. The covariance (or communalities, in factor analytic terms) among these attribute preferences might well be a clearer index of a perceived recreation function than is the preference for any one of these attributes.

Drawing upon the seminal work of Moos and his colleagues, and upon Blake, Weigl and Peroff's (1975) application to perceptions of residential community environments, Blake, Lawton, and Donnermeyer (in press) proposed three generic PCFs. "Personal relations" includes attributes such as proximity to relatives which are indicative of the potential for residents to provide emotional support for each other. "Maintenance and change" pertains to attributes providing for the long term survival of the community and its residents, e.g., medical services. "Recreation" refers to entertainment facilities and other attributes providing opportunities for fund and relaxation.

Subsequently, Blake and Lawton (Note 1) suggested a fourth generic PCF, "personal development", i.e., attributes like adult education programs in the schools that can facilitate personal growth and the development of self-esteem. The distinction between the personal development and recreation functions may be a bit fine, in that particular community attributes such as the presence of museums or the availability of craft clubs may be relevant to both functions. A given leisure activity can be a source of self-worth or self-respect, a locus for social participation (i.e., a place to make friends), a source of status or prestige, an entry to new experiences, a way to pass

time, etc. (Meyersohn, 1972). On the other hand, the distinction between the two may be meaningful. Not only may individuals distinguish between the two in the roles they see community attributes to play, but also the two may differ in the magnitude of their contributions to the supportiveness of the residential community environment. That is, individuals may often see opportunities or events providing excitement, entertainment, relaxation, or similar experiences pertinent to recreation community attributes as different from creative self expression, enhancement of skills, or comparable experiences pertinent to community attributes we term personal development (e.g., Andrews and Withey, 1976; Tinsley, Barrett, and Kass, 1977). Further, the implications of the two may be different for residents' welfare. While a vast number of people find stimulation and variety rewarding, while many find relaxation attractive, a relatively small number may be seeking opportunities for self realization (e.g., Maslow, 1962; Mitchell, Logothetti, and Kantor, 1971). Hence, in the general populace recreation attributes may play a different, and perhaps larger, role than do personal development opportunities in determining the adequacy of a community environment.

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Table 1 about here

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Table 1 displays samples of attributes characteristic of each PCF. Each of these "definitional" attributes is assumed to represent one and only one PCF in the eyes of residents of the typical communities.[1] Hence, the extent an individual values a particular PCF is seen in his or her combined preferences for the set of attributes defining that PCF. For example, the degree an individual looks to the residential community to provide emotional support and closeness (personal relations) can be gauged by "totaling" that person's desires to be in close proximity to friends and family members, to live among friendly neighbors, and to have warm relationships with others.

The contribution residents see another ("non-definitional") attribute making to their well-being is reflected in the association of that attribute with the definitional attributes of a PCF. For example, suppose that in a particular community individuals' orientations toward a maintenance PCF can predict their views of medical specialists, i.e., the more individuals value maintenance attributes, the more they value the availability of medical specialists. Here it would be assumed that the availability of medical specialists may well be seen by local residents to play a maintenance role. On the other hand, suppose that evaluations of an attribute could be predicted from reactions to more than one PCF. In this case, it would be assumed that the attribute might well be seen by residents as playing several functions.

In support of these assumptions, Blake, Weigl, and Perloff (1975) assessed the PCFs of residents of communities varying in size from rural to metropolitan. Ratings of the importance of community attributes selected to define the maintenance, personal relations, and recreation PCFs were factor analyzed, yielding three orthogonal factors representing the hypothesized PCFs. A separate personal development dimension was not investigated. In a later study (Blake and Lawton, Note 1) individuals evaluated the importance to their well-being of attributes hypothesized to define all four PCFs. Again, factor analysis of ratings suggested the existence of the four anticipated PCFs. Blake, Lawton, and Donnermeyer (in press) concluded that while a given set of perceived functions may be characteristic of individuals in general, there may be differences among subpopulations in perceived functions. Such differences may be particularly likely when a subpopulation is socially isolated from the general populace. These investigators found that in small communities of under 10,000 population the orientations of those over 65 years of age displayed the same PCFs as did individuals under 65. In larger communities, however, the elderly differed from the general populace. While younger individuals presented the basic PCF pattern, the elderly seemed to differentiate between attributes personally relevant to their unique needs

("personal maintenance") and facilities particularly appropriate to the general populace ("normative maintenance"). The investigators suggested that these results reflected the greater social integration of the aged in small communities than in larger, more urban areas.

Implications of a PCF perspective for characterizing supportive residential environments for the elderly rest heavily upon a previous assumption of the approach: the perceived potential contribution to well-being made by a service, , facility, or other attribute can be seen in the association between the perceived value of that attribute and the perceived value of alternative PCFs. Such an association does not necessarily indicate how well a service is currently providing that function, nor does it reflect all the possible ways in which the attribute can benefit elderly clients. Rather, the association represents the image of that attribute in the eyes of the elderly, their view of what an attribute of that type can do for them.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY

Two aspects of this illustration should be noted. First, it was conducted in small towns and rural areas. While the less specialized, less differentiated service systems found in these small residential community contexts (Young and Young, 1974) may make it easier to visualize the applicability of the PCF paradigm, the specific empirical results of the study may not be directly generalizable to a more urban milieu (Blake and Lawton, in press). Second, previous studies of the PCF approach have been limited to community attributes defining a PCF. The present study extended the concepts to non-definitional attributes - age - specific programs and services.

Perry County is a rather sparsely populated area in southern Indiana. The relatively low per capital income, $4,550 (1978 estimate), was based on agriculture, lumbering, and light manufacturing. As in many midwestern rural

areas, a variety of services for the elderly was present, though limited in scope and serving relatively few individuals.

A stratified random sample of 616 homeowners was selected from county utility listings and supplemented by 50 elected officials and members of a county rural development committee. Twenty-one volunteers from senior citizen centers phoned all individuals with listed phones to ask their participation in the study. Individuals who agreed to participate and those who could not be contacted were mailed the questionnaire. Two weeks later those who had not replied were sent a second questionnaire. As of one week later, 336 individuals responded, 235 under 60 and 101 over 60 years of age, yielding a response rate of 50.0%.

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Insert Table 2 here

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As shown in Table 2, the elderly, as well as the younger group, tended to be married, living with others, and fairly young. Further, the survey procedures favored home owners able to read and write, perhaps thereby screening out many of the especially isolated, infirm, and destitute. The sample of elderly may also have been somewhat unrepresentative of many rural communities in that it contained an especially large proportion of males.

Individuals rated the importance of 18 community attributes (see Table 3). They were instructed:

> "Please think about what <u>any</u> community must have in it, or very close by it, for you to be happy and content living there. How much do you need the following to be in or very close by that community?"

Respondents then rated each attribute on a 5-point scale ranging from

"don't care" (1) to "definitely must be there" (5).

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Insert Table 3 here

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A principal component analysis was conducted for the three items representing a PCF. This was done separately for each PCF in each age group. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, individuals in both age groups reacted rather consistently to the items representing a PCF. Although recreation was marginal, the first principal component could adequately represent individuals' reactions to items operationally defining a PCF.

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Insert Tables 4 and 5 here

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A "PCF importance" score was computed for each individual; this was that person's score on the first principal component of the three items defining a PCF. Since the weights obtained in the two age groups were highly comparable, the component weights used to generate an individuals' PCF importance scores were derived from analyses based on the entire respondent sample. The four PCF importance scores were then entered as independent valuables in additive multiple linear regression analyses. Separately for each age group, a regression equation was computed to predict ratings of each of the services/programs for the elderly.[2]

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Insert Table 6 here

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Table 6 displays the standardized beta coefficients, simple product-moment correlations, and the multiple R's for the regression analyses of the older age group. All analyses were significant ($df = 4/96$, $p < .01$). As would be anticipated, older individuals viewed health/medical, food/nutrition, and housing programs in terms of maintenance, and social clubs as recreational in nature. In contrast to these "single function" services, organized social-

recreational activities were associated with two functions, personal development and recreation. Further, the elderly sampled here reacted to senior centers as akin to opportunities for variety and enjoyment (recreation), for safety and survival (maintenance), for emotional support and closeness (personal relations). They did not appear to think of a center as a means to explore one's abilities and talents (personal development).

Those under 60 (see Table 7) viewed these programs and services somewhat differently. First, all regressions were significant ($df = 4/230$, $p < .01$). Yet, as indicated by the magnitude of the multiple correlations, the importance they placed on these services was far less strongly associated with their evaluations of the PCFs than was true for those over 60. This suggests that, at least in respect to the four PCF's studied, the younger group saw less value in these services as contributors to their well-being. Such a result was not unexpected, since these programs/services were targeted specifically for older individuals. Presumably, any benefits of these services for the well-being of those under 60 would be indirect.

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Insert Table 7 here

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Second, those under 60 perceived the specific functions played by particular programs/services somewhat differently. Senior centers were not associated with a personal relations function as was true for those over 60. Social clubs were viewed on terms of maintenance, recreation, and personal relations, rather than strictly recreation as amongolder persons. While personal development was predictive of organized social-recreational activities among those over 65, it did not reach significance among younger respondents.

As exemplified in the above study, the implications of a PCF perspective for characterizing supportive residential environments are straight forward. Which attributes are relevant to the supportiveness of the environment? Relevant attributes are the "definitional"attributes which are concrete manifestations of a PCF and "non-definitional"attributes which are systematically associated with PCFs. How do attributes contribute to the supportiveness of an environment? The basis is a function of the specific constellation of PCFs with which it is associated.

Let us turn first to possible implications for program administrators and other practitioners concerned with the well-being of the elderly in a specific community. The various perceived functions can serve as criteria against which the elderly (or, for that matter, individuals in general) evaluate the adequacy of a given residential environment. If the well-being experienced by an individual is a resultant of such a comparative process (e.g., Campbell, et. al., 1976), these functions may serve to suggest how the supportiveness of that particular residential environment can be improved given the unique needs and orientations of the local elderly.

PCF analysis might be heuristic in helping to tailor local programs and services to the requirements of a community's elderly. First, a practitioner might wish to assess how adequately do present programs and services provide those functions which a PCF analysis has suggested the elderly anticipate. In our illustrative study, do extant organized social recreational activities for the elderly adequately provide personal development opportunities as well as chances for variety and stimulation? Do local senior centers address maintenance as well as recreation and personal relations concerns? Next, consideration could be given to PCFs which are not closely associated with any current programs or services. In the Perry County survey only senior centers were relevant to personal relations. Why? Does this imply that these needs

are being met elsewhere, so that the elderly do not have to turn to formal programs and services for personal relationship opportunities (Blake and Lawton, in press)? Or, less optimistically, does it mean that current services should be modified or new ones developed to meet these needs?

Further, images of services for the elderly in the eyes of the general populace are also clearly important to the practitioner. Local bond issues, rezoning petitions, and other legal/political actions can bear directly upon the operation of facilities and services for the aged. Public support for these actions may well depend upon the image held by the general public about the contribution these services or facilities can make to one's own well being. Hence, educational efforts through the media, schools, or other vehicles may at times be necessary to ensure public understanding and support for local services and facilities for the elderly. Such information might be particularly important when the general public is found to see little or no contribution to their own welfare from age-specific services, or when they look to a service for functions quite different from those which can actually be provided. Both of these circumstances appeared in the illustrative study.

On a more theoretical level, the present approach posits each PCF as a potentially separate basis for characterizing a supportive residential environment. That an environment is supportive along one dimension does not imply that it is equally supportive along the other PCF dimensions. The community attributes which define or are associated with the PCFs are the 'contact points' through which the support is provided. Along somewhat the same line, in the present study the PCFs were differentially predictive of preferences for the programs and services considered here. This pattern of results suggests the value, at least in respect to residential community environments, of differentiating among all four dimensions rather than integrating recreation and personal development into a single domain as in the general social ecological model (cf.

Blake and Lawton, Note 1). Further, the pattern of differences found here between older and younger individuals suggests that, at least in smaller communities, aging is not associated with a change in the nature of PCFs per se. Rather, aging may be associated with change in the relevance of specific services and programs to given PCFs.

EVALUATION

Ideally, a conceptual model should be both specific and general, i.e., unequivocal when applied to the given situation for which it was intended and also widely applicable across many concrete instances of that situation. Unfortunately, conceptual models that have high specificity and high generality are fairly rare. At least in part, the value of the PCF perspective to the task of characterizing an environment's supportiveness can be evaluated in terms of the balance it has sought between specificity and generality. The PCF model typically has settled any conflicts between generality and specificity in favor of the latter.

On the positive side of the ledger, in comparison to many other models pertinent to the person-environment fit of the elderly (Lawton 1977), the PCF construct is readily operationalized within a residential community context. Consequently, it is more unequivocally testable, and, hence, falsifiable.

On the negative side, the construct is intended only for the perceptual arena. As noted before, the PCF model does not attempt to account for community attributes which determine one's well-being but are not cognitized as such.

Further, because the approach is based upon the orientations of indivduals actually residing within a particular community environment, the PCF model has the advantage of being capable of generating propositions specific to particular residential environments. This benefit, however, is achieved at the expense of some generalizability. For example, Blake and Lawton (in press) found in

the communities they investigated that senior centers were not associated with a personal relations function, in the present study, however, senior centers were. In terms of the association of non-definitional attributes to particular PCFs, what is found within one residential community, then, may not be found within others.

Finally, as noted by Blake and Lawton (Note 1), the PCF construct pertains directly to a compleat residential community (Effrat, 1973). It may not apply to other types of "community", e.g., the community as a social network.

In conclusion,then, the potential value of the PCF model is based on its ability to pertain to concrete residential community environments. Potential liabilities emerge from its generalizability to other environments.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] Exceptions to this pattern are possible. The specific attributes expressing a function should vary with the experiences of the residents within the communities in question. For example, residents of communities heavily dependent upon tourism for their economic vitality may consider parks, movie theaters, and other recreational facilities as relevant to a maintenance function rather than simply to recreation. Consistent with the application of a social ecological paradigm to other environments (e.g., Insel and Moos, 1974; Moos and Brownstein, 1977), though, it is anticipated that these four "basic" dimensions and their definitional attributes would hold across a wide variety of residential community environments.

[2] Bivariate trend analyses performed separately for each predictor - criterion variable combination supported the linearity assumption, while preliminary tests incorporating all PCF interaction terms in the equations substantiated the additivity assumption of the analysis.

TABLE 1 Attributes Reflecting a PCF

Maintenance	Personal Development	Personal Relations	Recreation
Public Hospital	Self improvement opportunities	Close to friends	Parks and playgrounds
Store and shopping facilities	Chances to learn new skills and develop talents	Near to relatives	Wide range of places for fun and relaxation
Availability of good paying jobs	Civic or charitable organizations to join	Friendly residents	Outdoor recreational facilities
Schools	Adult education classes teaching fine arts (like sculpture)	Chances to develop warm, close relationships with others	Indoor entertainment facilities (like bowling, movies)

TABLE 2 Survey Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Under 60 (N = 235)	60 or more (N = 101)
$\bar{X}$ Years of Age	41.0	67.5
$\bar{X}$ Years Lived in County	30.5	52.5
$\bar{X}$ Household Size	3.5	2.0
Percent Male/Female	66.7/33.3	60.4/39.6
Percent Married	87.9	71.3

TABLE 3 Community Attribute Descriptions

Maintenance
"High quality community hospital"
"Top quality schools"
"Availability of good paying jobs"
Personal Relations
"Close to relatives"
"Nearness to friends"
"Chances to develop close, warm relationships with others"
Recreation
"Range of places for fun and relaxation"
"Extensive indoor entertainment"
"Outdoor recreational facilities"
Personal Development
"Opportunities to learn new skills and develop talents"
"Adult education classes teaching fine arts"
"Opportunities for self improvement"
Programs & Services for Elderly
"Senior citizen centers"
"Health and medical programs for the elderly"
"Food and nutrition programs for aged residents"
"Organized social and recreational activities for aged residents"
"Programs to ensure adequate housing for senior citizens"
"Social clubs for senior citizens"

TABLE 4 Principal Component Analyses For Individuals 60 or More

Attributes	$\bar{X}$	h	w	Percent of Total Variance
Maintenance				84.4%
Hospital	4.08	.862	.366	
Schools	3.82	.809	.355	
Jobs	3.84	.861	.366	
Personal Relations				68.0%
Relatives	3.21	.694	.408	
Friends	3.16	.766	.429	
Close relationships	2.89	.581	.374	
Recreation				51.7%
Range of place	2.82	.288	.347	
Indoor entertainment	2.31	.643	.518	
Outdoor facilities	2.95	.618	.507	
Personal Development				65.2%
New skills	3.18	.699	.427	
Adult education	2.51	.557	.381	
Self improvement	3.54	.702	.428	

TABLE 5 Principal Component Analyses For Individuals Under 60

Attributes	$\bar{X}$	h	w	Percent of Total Variance
Maintenance				76.7%
Hospital	4.32	.683	.359	
Schools	4.40	.838	.398	
Jobs	4.37	.781	.384	
Personal Relations				59.7%
Relatives	2.89	.669	.456	
Friends	3.01	.760	.486	
Close relationships	3.19	.363	.336	
Recreation				49.7%
Range of places	3.32	.606	.522	
Indoor entertainment	2.89	.314	.376	
Outdoor facilities	3.43	.572	.507	
Personal Development				58.1%
New skills	3.90	.746	.495	
Adult education	2.68	.330	.329	
Self improvement	3.97	.668	.469	

TABLE 6 Regression Analyses Predicting Evaluation of Those 60 or More

Attribute	Maintenance		Recreation		Personal Development		Personal Relations		R
	B	r	B	r	B	r	B	r	
Senior Centers	.247*	.577**	.289**	.578**	.161	.567**	.190*	.510**	.706**
Food/Nutrition Programs	.366**	.488**	.143	.293**	.129	.404**	.011	.294**	.525**
Health/Medical Programs	.364**	.473**	.035	.289**	.174	.409**	-.035	.239**	.495**
Housing Programs	.294*	.480**	.110	.367**	.173	.445**	.050	.321**	.524**
Organized Social Recreation Activities	.164	.520**	.226*	.528**	.263*	.574**	.172	.469**	.660**
Social Clubs	.154	.414**	.423**	.551**	.018	.406**	.106	.373**	.586**

* $P < .05$
** $P < .01$

TABLE 7 Regression Analyses Predicting Evaluations of Those Under 60

Attribute	Maintenance		Recreation		Personal Development		Person Relations		R
	B	r	B	r	B	r	B	r	
Senior Citizens	.282*	.355**	.163**	.262**	.060**	.242**	.035	.116*	.402**
Food/Nutrition Programs	.174*	.245**	.100	.192**	.067	.195**	.117	.172**	.308**
Health/Medical Programs	.161*	.226**	.038	.127*	.099	.196**	.079	.124*	.265**
Housing Programs	.215**	.259**	.048	.136*	.049	.173**	.075	.121*	.283**
Organized Social Recreation Activities	.131	.217**	.145*	.223**	.086	.202**	.079	.142*	.299**
Social Clubs	.161*	.229**	.156*	.241**	.011	.160**	.178**	.235**	.344**

* $P < .05$
** $P < .01$